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SUBJECT: FORMER LDP OFFICIALS ADMITS LIE ABOUT KOIZUMI DPRK VISIT

Classified By: Ambassador J.Thomas Schieffer. Reasons 1.4 (B) (D)

11. (U) The December 8 edition of Tokyo Shimbun reported that former LDP vice president Taku Yamasaki has admitted that he lied when he told reporters that former prime minister Junichiro Koizumi had expressed a willingness to make a third trip to North Korea. On December 7, Japanese-language news outlets quoted Yamasaki as saying that Koizumi had shown a willingness to make a third trip to North Korea, this time as a special envoy, to try to break the deaklock in Japan's relations with the DPRK. In correcting this earlier statement, Yamasaki said that "I suggested that Mr. Koizumi make a third visit to North Korea. He was just listening to me." According to Tokyo Shimbun, Koizumi later confirmed that Yamasaki had made up the story.

12. (C) On December 7, Isao Iijima, former secretary to former PM Koizumi, told the Embassy that Yamasaki's comment that Koizumi wished to visit the DPRK again had been a complete fabrication ("detarame"). According to Iijima, Koizumi did tell Yamasaki that he strongly wished to solve the nuclear and WMD issues at a June 6 dinner the two men had together. However, Iijima denied that Koizumi ever said he wanted to visit North Korea again. Iijima said that Yamasaki made the false statement because he himself wanted to visit Pyongyang as Koizumi's representative in order to gain the political limelight.
SCHIEFFER